

Remarks

Claims 1-6 and 17 remain in the case. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims of the application including the originally submitted claims 1-6 and newly added claim 17. Applicant hereby cancels claims 7-16 as being drawn to non-elected subject matter.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jourquin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,662,996) in view of Nielsen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,716,558). Applicant's invention as claimed in claim 1 is directed to a method of forming a polyurethane skin for an interior part of a vehicle by providing an air assisted spray nozzle that delivers an atomizing air stream. An in-mold coating composition is heated to a temperature above ambient to heat the in-mold coating composition. The heated in-mold coating composition is sprayed onto a forming surface by the air assisted spray nozzle to create an in-mold coating layer over which a layer of polyurethane is applied to form the polyurethane skin.

The Examiner admits the Jourquin et al. fails to teach providing an air assisted spray nozzle for delivering and atomizing air stream and heating the in-mold composition to a temperature above ambient. While Jourquin et al. does teach forming a polyurethane skin having an in-mold coating that is provided in the forming tool and applying a layer of polyurethane over the in-mold coating, the failure of Jourquin et al. to teach the use of an air assisted spray nozzle that dispenses a heated in-mold coating composition is a fundamental failure in the teaching of the Jourquin et al. reference.

The Examiner relies upon Nielsen et al. for its teaching of a general method of spraying a liquid composition containing a volatile solvent using carbon dioxide or ethane to form solid particulates, coating powders, and catalyst materials. The objective of Nielsen et al. is to produce solid particulates, including powders and catalyst materials, having a narrow particle size distribution. The materials are then disclosed as being sprayed at higher solids

levels in ambient air or in heated air that is directly applied to the spray instead of a spray chamber.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness based upon the Jourquin and Neilsen references. The principle deficiency in the Examiner's *prima facie* case of obviousness is that there is no teaching or suggestion in Jourquin et al. or Neilsen et al. to combine their teachings as proposed by the Examiner. The Jourquin et al. patent does not disclose the use of either an air assisted spray nozzle or the concept of heating the in-mold coating composition to a temperature above ambient to create a heated in-mold coating composition. Even though the Jourquin et al. patent discloses multiple examples of their process, not one suggests Applicant's solution of providing a heated in-mold coating for the purpose of providing a more efficient process requiring less time to perform the step of the process of applying the in-mold coating to the mold release compound in the mold. In addition, it fails to provide a higher quality product having less sags or runs in the coating. The advantages that are pointed out by Applicant in the Background Art section by comparison to the prior art distinguishes processes such as the processes disclosed in Jourquin et al. that suffer from the excessive cycle time and quality control problems that lead to sags and runs in the in-mold coating. Jourquin et al. suffers from the problems noted by Applicant and does not propose the solution disclosed and claimed by Applicant.

The Neilsen et al. patent discloses a process in which a liquid composition containing a volatile solvent is sprayed with compressed carbon dioxide or ethane to form solid particulates, coating powders, and catalyst materials. Neilsen et al. discloses a method of applying a water born coating spray to achieve shorter drying times. However, the focus of the Neilsen et al. patent is to provide a method of making solid particulates of a desired average particle size. The Neilsen et al. patent fails to disclose specific teachings of claim 1 of forming a polyurethane skin for an interior part of a vehicle. As claimed, an air assisted spray nozzle receives an in-mold coating composition that is heated to a temperature above ambient to create a heated in-mold coating composition that is then sprayed on as a heated in-

mold coating composition to create an in-mold coating layer. The Neilsen et al. patent also fails to disclose the concept of applying a layer of polyurethane over the in-mold coating layer to form a polyurethane skin. Furthermore, the Neilsen et al. patent fails to teach or suggest heating an in-mold coating composition and a process of making a polyurethane skin that has an in-mold coating as claimed by Applicant.

Turning to new claim 17, Applicant has added this claim to specifically recite that the method may further comprise providing a color manifold station that has a plurality of in-mold coating compositions that are of different colors and supplying one of the colored in-mold coating compositions to the air assisted spray nozzle. The Neilsen et al. and Jourquin et al. patents fail to disclose the use of a color manifold station and also fail to disclose the concept of supplying one of the differently colored in-mold coating compositions to the air assisted spray nozzle. This concept is disclosed in the application at page 5, line 23 - page 6, line 1 and at page 4, lines 25-27. The concept is also illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 of the drawings.

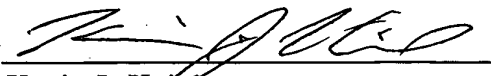
Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney if it would advance prosecution of this case.

No additional fee is believed to be necessary for the submission of new claim 17.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendment adding claim 17 and in view of the preceding arguments that traverse the Examiner's *prima facie* case of obviousness. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this case to issue.

Respectfully submitted,
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By



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Date: 5/30/06

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